

GENERAL VIEW

OF THE PRESENT

POLITICS and INTERESTS

Of the PRINCIPAL

Powers of EUROPE;

Particularly of Those at WAR;

Wherein the Nature of the PEACE to be expected
upon the Conclusion of the WAR, and the Conduct
of those who chiefly contributed to the Successes of
FRANCE, are impartially considered.

In a LETTER from the HAGUE, to a FOREIGN
MINISTER at LONDON.

L O N D O N;

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GENERAL VIEW, &c.

S I R,

Hague, March 4-15, 1747.

YOU suppose, without Doubt, this Place to be the Theatre of News and Politics, as well now, as during the late general War, or you had not laid your Injunctions on me so peremptorily as you do in your last, to give you my Thoughts on the present State of public Affairs. But the Scene is quite alter'd here since those happy Days, when the Successes of the high Allies had cemented the strictest Union among them, tho' of different Religions and Interests; and that same Union contributed solely to their Successes. It was then Openness in every Visage one met with, and Frankness in every Company one mix'd with, whereas at present, every Face you meet is set for the Day, and you are sure to be deceived by most, if not all those you frequent.

I fear the World is grown worse universally, but am sure it is obviously so in this Country, where Diffidence seems to have been substituted, by general Consent, in the room of Confidence, and private Self-Interest, instead of that public-spirited Interest, which heretofore chiefly conduced to raising this State to a Pitch of Greatness which struck all *Europe* with Awe and Amazement. In those Days it may be said, that this Republic gave the Law to all *Europe*, at present she seems to receive it from all the Powers on the Continent. What can have caused the fatal Transition? I shan't take upon me to solve a Question attended with so great Difficulty, myself, but to satisfy your Curiosity, shall insert the Thoughts of one of the greatest Men of this Country on the Subject, with whom I lately contracted an Intimacy.

This extraordinary Person seems to have taken *Atticus* for his Model. He is esteemed by all that know him, and courted by the different Parties of his Countrymen; but like that reverend *Roman*, he steers a middle Course, adheres to no Party, tho' carested by all, chusing to lead a private Life, when he might shine in the Management of public Affairs. I took the Liberty, one Day, to wish he would reconcile himself to a more active Life. — 'On a Supposition, I presume, said he, pretty hastily, that I should be of some Service to my Country, in this Time of Difficulty and Danger. As much as I love a retired, disengaged

aged Life, continued he, I would quit it with Pleasure, could I see the least room for hoping that my setting a Hand to the Helm, would contribute to steering the Bark of State into the Port of Safety ; but Sir, in a Land so divided as mine, among a People with such various Views, what Hopes could I entertain of meliorating the Condition of my Country, should I mix with her Councils ?

‘ It is the Fate of all popular Governments, such as ours, to be divided into Parties, but generally all Animosities subside, all Parties unite, on the View of common Danger. This indeed was our Case, ’till of late ; but I know not by what Infatuation our Parties, since the War, seem to have taken deeper root, and to have grown to greater Consistency than could be imagined of Bodies acting on different Principles ; as if the Successes of *France*, at their Threshold, which should be the Cause of their Union, had been that of their Independency of each other.’

On my observing, that the more acute the Disease seemed to be, the greater Necessity there was for some immediate Application, which, I thought, could come from no Hand more skilful and steady than his own ; he replied, ‘ Sir, I thank you for your good Opinion of me, and I will not disown to you my being vain enough to think I could remedy the grown and growing Evils of my Country, if I could render my Countrymen less corrupt and self-interested : but as I despair of the latter, I dare not attempt the former. I might vainly hope, like a great and good Man in a neighbouring Country, to be able by Precept and Example, to prevail, alter and amend ; but alas ! like him I must expect to be born down by Numbers, and to be carried down the contagious, fatal Tide, instead of being able to stem it. Thus should I become answerable for all the Ills of an Administration I was unable to reform, by seeming a Party to their Misconduct. No, Sir ; The unfavourable Light in which that *E--s* Nobleman appears at present, by associating with Men, and adopting Measures he had publicly condemn’d, shall be a Lesson for me not to risque my Integrity, and Character, as he has, to gratify any hidden, sickly Appetite I might have for Power.’

Such Reasons, probably, might *Atticus* give of old, for not attempting to free his Country, at a time that it is conjectured, by many, he might, if he had joined the Party opposing the Invaders of the Freedom of *Rome*. But without condemning either the *Roman* or *Belgick Atticus*, I will proceed to give you the Remarks of the latter, on the present Divisions of his Countrymen, their Corruption and the Declension of their Power and political Courage, I chuse to give you this great Man’s Thoughts, on public Affairs, in his own Words, as near as I can recollect,

that they might not lose any of that Strength and Clearness with which he delivers himself on all Subjects.

‘ Considering, said he, the Success of the Allies in the last general War, there was Reason to hope, that *France* might be detain’d within the Bounds of Moderation, at least for the present Century. And tho’ the Peace of *Utrecht* might have been more conducive to the End propos’d, if *Spain* had been detached from *France*, yet such as it was, it would have answered the Views of the Powers concern’d, especially of this State, if on the Accession of the present Royal Family of *England*, the *English* or *Hanoverian* Statesmen then in the Management of Affairs at *London*, had not taken it into their Heads to supply the Defects of that Treaty, as the Phrase then was.

‘ It might have been necessary for the new Family and New Ministry to pretend amending a Treaty which they had taken so great pains to ridicule and vilify; but it had been well for us, and even for the *English*, if the Ministers of *George I.* had not so insatiable a Thirst for Negotiation and Treaty-making. The whole System of grand Alliance was chng’d in the Beginning of that Reign. The Court of *London*, all of a sudden, was become suspicious of all the World but *France*, the only Power that could give Cause for Suspicion to the *English* Nation.

‘ It will be hardly credited hereafter, that a Prince of the Empire, one of the Members of the grand Alliance, a Protestant, and King of *England*, should grow jealous of the House of *Austria*, and go into the closest Friendship with that of *Bourbon*. Yet such was the Policy, such the Conduct of the Cabinet of *London*, after the Accession. But the World is now no longer at a Loss for the Motive to a Train of Politics which, in the Beginning appear’d so mysterious and repugnant to the Interests of the Maritime Powers. *H---* was to be aggrandized at the Expence of all other Considerations; and *France*, that is the late Duke of *Orleans*, who ruled *France*, fell in with that Favourite View, as the certain Means of dissolving the Union that had been contracted between the Parties to the grand Alliance. The politic Regent succeeded; and hence sprung all those big Ills we feel and complain of.

‘ Need I trace more minutely the Misconduct of the first, and indeed subsequent Ministers of the Princes in *Europe*, who had most Reason to guard against the Snares and Wiles of the common Enemy? But Love of his native Soil subdued all Reflection in the Royal Breast, but what tended to sooth that Love; and thus no Measure that did not tend to enlarge and enrich the *E---* was cherish’d, and pursued. I wish I could say, that the same Passion, or, as some call it, Patriotism, had been confin’d to that first Reign only.

‘ The

‘ The polite Regent was an early Observer of this Passion, and his Title to the Crown of *France*, in Virtue of the Treaty of *Utrecht*, furnished him with a specious Pretence for imposing on the Credulity of his new Ally. The Power of *England* was to be employed in Support of the Regent’s Title to the Crown, on the Decease of *Lewis XV.* then a Child; and that of *France* was to be employed not only in Support of the new Family in *England*, but to render their House equal, if not superior to any in the Empire.

‘ Thus was that Train first laid, by the adroit *Frenchman*, which had afterwards taken fire in so many different Shapes. First, in the Purchase of *Bremen* and *Verden*, and next in making war upon *Sweden*, in order to force her to a Ratification of that Purchase; afterwards in a Quarrel with the Czar, *Peter I.* to obstruct his Views on *Mecklenburgh*, which was design’d to be annex’d to *H—r.* Here again a new Scene open’d, which was never after clos’d, while *George I.* lived, or rather ’till after the Death of the Emperor *Charles VI.*

‘ This Prince, whether jealous of a new growing Power in the Empire, or moved by Motives of Equity, he not only thwarted the Designs of the Elector upon *Mecklenburgh*, but procrastinated the Investiture of the new Acquisitions. Hence sprung that Distrust and Coolness which ever after subsisted between the Imperial and Royal Houses, ’till the late Distresses of the Queen of *Hungary* called forth the latent *English* Spirit, in Support of the Ballance of Power. Yet, Sir, how was this glorious Spirit, which if cherished and properly exerted, would have roused all the Friends of Liberty to its Aid, restrained by new Projects for aggrandizing the favourite Electorate? but of this more hereafter.

Charles VI. foreseeing the Dangers which threaten’d the Balance of Power, by the unnatural Union between the Courts of *London* and *Paris*, he availed himself of the Ambition of the Queen of *Spain*, and her Jealousy of the Regent, and by a Stroke of Policy never enough to be admired, detached the younger Branch of the House of *Bourbon* from the elder. But what was the Conduct of the *English* Court on this critical Occasion? Just the Reverse of what it should have been. Instead of taking advantage of this happy and refin’d Policy of the Court of *Vienna*, that of *London* moved Heaven and Earth to be revenged of *Charles VI.* for daring to take so bold a Step without the Concurrence of *England*, or rather of *H—r.*

In Consequence of this avowed Resentment, was the memorable Treaty of *Hanover*, contracted in 1725; a Compact attended with an immense Expence, much Perplexity, and infinite
Mischief,

Mischief, as well to this State as to *England*. The late King of *Prussia*, who had been originally a Party to that Treaty, soon perceived the mischievous Tendency of it, and withdrew ; but our *Dutch* Statesmen, tho' they saw no less clearly than his *Prussian* Majesty, the impending Ruin, had not the Resolution, or Virtue, to act as became them ; they were either intimidated, or corrupted, and perhaps both ; the first by *France*, which by her then Connexion with *England*, was in a Capacity to prescribe ; and the latter by *England*, to which *France* very readily assigned the Province of secret Distribution.

' The Breach was now so greatly widened between the Courts of *London*, and *Vienna*, and *Madrid*, that it never since had been closed between the first and the last, nor between the first and the second 'till after the Emperor's Death. But that Treaty of *Hanover* was productive of a more fatal Mischief, which was a Breach between the Courts of *London* and *Berlin*, which 'till then had been, as in some Policy they ought, in the closest Bands of Friendship and Affection : other Incidents have since contributed to cool the Royal House of *Prussia* to a Degree to be lamented by all true Friends of Liberty, but it may be truly said, that the first jealous Misunderstanding between those Royal Houses took its rise from the Treaty of *Hanover*. It had so little Connection with the Interest of *England*, and so obvious a View to the Aggrandizement of the Electorate, and adding to the Interest of *France*, that the King of *Prussia* must have had no Idea of the Independency of the Empire and general Balance of Power, unless he had sever'd himself from the other Parties to that Treaty.

' Here one would think are Evils enough springing from the Errors or Ambition of the Cabinet of *London*, in the late Reign, but have we not seen more and greater issuing from the same Source, since those Days of Error and Mistake ? Has that Cabinet chang'd its first System ? Has the E---e been less cherish'd, or its separate Interest less pursued ? Has not the real Interests of the Maritime Powers been as much neglected lately as before ? and are the Measures of that Cabinet, which affects to take the Lead on all Occasions, any otherwise altered than what arises from Necessity ; or can Maxims be deemed altered, where only the Position changes fortuitously, but the View still continues the same, invariably the same, in regard to the Aggrandizement of foreign Dominions ?

' As the Cabinet of *Spain*, ever since 1714, has had one Point of Interest constantly in view, such was the Settlement of the Issue by the King's second Consort ; so, since the same Period of Time also, had that of *London* one, and one only principal

principal Interest in view, which was the Aggrandizement of a little Dominion, which if enlarged, even to the proposed Extent, could serve no Purpose except the gratifying a Prejudice, which tho' it may be natural, yet must ever be injurious, in the main, to those who indulge it.

' How great and various the Confusions, how expensive and bloody the Contests that have arose in Consequence of the System of the Cabinet of *Spain*! and has the Pursuit of the second System been attended with less Expence or Perplexity? I believe *England* feels very sensibly the Effects of this uninterrupted Pursuit; but sure I am, that this Country of mine owes to it her present Divisions, Corruption, Perplexity and Danger.

' You seem surprized, Sir, that I should cross the Sea for the Cause of the present Distractions of this Republic; and indeed to a Foreigner, as you are, such an Excursion would seem as unjust as unnecessary. But all *Dutchmen* of Observation scruple not to concur, that our present Calamities spring from a System adopted and invariably pursued, as has been observ'd, by a neighbouring Cabinet.

' Before the Middle of the Year 1714, we were one People, had but one View, and one Intent; but after that Period of Time, we broke imperceptibly, and by degrees, into Factions and Parties, which grew up by Time and the secret Influence of *France* and *England*, into that dangerous Consistency which I am sorry to say, is now perceptible to all *Europe*.

' The close Connection between the Courts of *London* and *Versailles*, ever since the Year 1714, 'till the present War, necessarily threw this State into a Dependency on *France*; at first it may have been Complaisance only, and I believe no more was Intended; but wherever *France* is admitted to persuade, she will dictate in time. The *Dutch* became tame and passive, in Proportion to the Increase of *French* Influence at *London*; and so habituated were they to the Yoke, that they could not cast it off, even after the War had dissolved that Influence. But who are answerable for that Passiveness which has lately appeared in the Conduct of *Hollanders*? Who have introduced Venality and Corruption among us, First to bend us to the Will of the connected Crowns, and next to that of a Stadtholder?

' *France* acted all along a double Part by *England*: With regard to aggrandizing *H---*, she not only co-operated with, but egged on the Court of *London*, and at the same time created Jealousies and Suspicions of her at all the *German* Courts, especially that of *Vienna*. And with regard to the Stadtholder, at the same time that she seemingly co-operated with *England* in the Support of the Prince of *O-----*, she secretly raised a Party,

by

by Persuasion and Corruption, able to defeat all that either Family-Interest, or the Persuasion and Gold of *E-----d* could effect in that Prince's Favour. ----- Would you believe, that the first Thoughts of bestowing the eldest Daughter of *E-----d* on the Prince of *O-----e*, were inspired by the Court of *France*, at the same time that she secretly alarmed the *Dutch* with the dangerous Consequence of the Alliance.'

' And, Sir, has not *France* succeeded in all her Schemes? But who were the Dupes of her refined Politics? And who are the nearest becoming the Victim of her Ambition? *Holland* is that Victim ripe for Immolation. Rent by Party and Divisions; frightened with the Idea of a Stadtholder on one hand, and *French* Chains on the other; enervated by the constant Expence she was persuaded into by the Court of *L---n* since the Accession, particularly since 1725; in such a Situation, and over-run by Luxury and Corruption imported from a neighbouring Island, what could be expected from *Holland*, but Irresolution, Timidity and Passiveness?

' The late War between *France* and the House of *Austria*, furnished *England* and *Holland* with a specious Pretext, and a glorious Opportunity of shaking off *French* Influence, and returning to the Pursuit of the natural Interests of both Countries. But the over-pacific Disposition of *W-----e*, the *English* Minister, or the Influence of *France*, lost us that Opportunity, which we can never more hope for. Had *French* Influence, and the Dread of a Stadtholder been less than they were, still must the *Dutch* have acted the Part they did, as there was no moving *England* to the Relief of their common and natural Ally.

' With regard to *England* and *Holland*, it would certainly have been sound Policy to have preserved the House of *Austria*, and to have secured the House of *Lorrain* the Possession of their ancient Patrimony; but, perhaps, it might be otherwise with regard to *H-----r*. But be that as it will, we may impute the present foreboding Prospect of public Affairs to the fatal Neutrality of the Maritime Powers at that critical Juncture.

' It is true, that on the breaking out of the present War, the Cabinet of *L-----n* seemed to have changed Sentiments, and to have thrown off the dead Weight of *French* Influence, which had hung on all the Measures of *England* ever since the Accession to that Time. But had this Change been as real, as it was believed all over *Europe* to have been forced and unnatural, and only a temporary Expedient of a new Minister willing to explode the Measures of the late, long, passive Administration, in order to take deeper Root in his new Employment, it could not answer the Purpose in view, which was the

reducing,

reducing *France* to Reason. The *Dutch* were no longer the same People; and there were no Hopes that *Prussia*, the only Power in *Germany* that could be most useful, could be detached from *France*, or rather from her own Interest. And let me say, that *England* created, or helped to create that Interest, which, I fear, will for ever keep *Prussia* in Friendship with *France*, and at Enmity with the House of *Austria*. While the fair Province of *Silesia* is annexed to the *Prussian* Dominions, we must never expect a cordial Union between the Courts of *Vienna* and *Berlin*; nor between this last and that of *L---n* while *Bremen* and *Verden* are annexed to *H---r*, and there remains any Traces of a View to Secularizations, or other Means of aggrandizing the Electorate. *Prussia*, I fear, will as impatiently bear an Increase of Power at *H---r*, as at *Vienna*.

But had not the Prospect been so unfavourable on the Side of *Prussia*, how could it be expected that the *Dutch* in their then Situation, could be brought to co-operate against *France* in the Manner proposed? An open Breach with the House of *Bourbon* would have lost them all the vast Benefits of Trade, of which they had tasted since the War. Besides, a War would have opened a sure Way for that Power of an Individual among themselves, which they had resolved since the Death of King *William*, never to suffer. Add hereunto that there were then, as still, Parties among us able to distract any Government, and thwart any Measures. You know, Sir, that *France* has her Partizans among us, and that they are pacific as well as the Opponents to a Stadtholder. Supposing the *E---sh* and *O-----* Parties, or rather the Party for War should prevail for a Time, the other would grow upon them, and so clog their Measures as to render their Efforts useless to the Common Cause.

As for the Patriot Squadron, so called from its Independency, and adhering to neither of the two grand Parties mentioned above. I am not clear, but if it must join either, it would be the pacific. For however some Foreigners may have exploded Monsieur *De Witt*'s Politics and Plan of a perpetual Alliance with *France*, and by that means acquiring the constant Protection of that powerful Crown, the Sentiments of that great Statesman have been imbibed in these Provinces, and have made deeper Impression than may be imagined by those who are not thoroughly acquainted with the Change in the Humour and Genius of our People since the last general Peace.

Nations vary from themselves like Individuals, which one may perceive, not only of the Ancients but Moderns. See the Change in the Nations around us; see it in *England*, the natural

Ally of this State. How altered that once, brave, faithful People from what the *English* were a Century ago? The whole Earth is become much more venal and corrupt; but I think the fatal Vices seem to have taken deeper Root in *England* than any where else: Whence can the Transition happen? From Irreligion, it is said. But whence that very Irreligion which is complained to have occasioned their present Depravity? Surely, not from the Nature of their Government, or Constitution; nor from the Effects of the Revolution which was effected at the Expence of *Holland*?—Here appeared to me so wide a Variation in his Account of the Revolution from what I had ever heard, that I took the Liberty to interrupt him, saying, Sir, I ever understood that the Expence *Holland* was at to raise her Stadtholder to the Throne of *England*, had been reimbursed by *England*.

‘ You fix your Attention, it seems, said the Patriot, to the immediate Expence that attended the Prince’s Expedition; but I extend mine to the Consequences attending that great and hazardous Undertaking, which, upon the good and wise Monsieur *De Witt*’s Plan, ought not to have been attempted. I am not so skilled in the Affairs of *England* as to know whether her Trade has extended in proportion to her Expences since the Revolution; but, sure I am, that the Trade of *Holland* has been declining ever since. And let me say, that Trade is every thing to the *Dutch*. Whatever contributes to its Declension must be odious to them; nor can Extent of Territory, Addition of Barrier, or any other such Advantage compensate for the Loss of Trade.

‘ We were taught, in the last Age, to be in love with Sieges and Battles in order to gain that Phantom, called *Glory*, and that no less insubstantial Security, a distant Barrier; but Experience confirms the Error of these Notions. That Species of *Glory* acquired by Arms, is by no means the Business of a trading Nation, and the present War is an irrefragable Proof, that the Friendship and Protection of so powerful a Neighbour as *France* is, are far better Securities for the Freedom and Trade of *Dutchmen* than any Barrier. See with what Rapidity we lost those boasted Securities, the Equivalent for the Blood spilt and immense Treasures expended since the Revolution; and for such a vast Declension of Trade as nothing can recover but Peace, which can never be durable unless on the Basis of *De Witt*’s Plan.

‘ War, or Trafficking for Men, is the principal Trade of *Germany*; War is partly the Business of *France*, and may occasionally be that, not of *England*, whose natural Interest is Trade.

Trade, but of the *English* Court. I don't know but the grand Opposition in *W-----*'s Administration, would have proved fatal as well to the Court as Ministers, if the big Spirit then raised had not evaporated, by the bursting out of the War with *Spain*. Nor probably had Lord *C-----* less Occasion for a *French* War, as well for his own as his *M-----*'s Security. The Spirit of the Opposition had been laid, but not extinguished, and might soon rekindle, if not diverted by some greater Occupation than a *Spanish* War.

But see the Consequence of these narrow self-interested Politics. *England* having precipitated herself into these Wars with the different Branches of the House of *Bourbon*, perhaps to avoid domestic Feuds, or with Views far more inglorious, has bewildered herself in a Labyrinth she won't find it easy to extricate herself. See the vast Increase of her Debts, the Decrease of her Commerce, and the Increase of her Vices; and what has she got in Exchange? or is like to get, by the immense Treasure she has doled away of late Years, to support the House of *Austria*, and aggrandize that of *Savoy*?

England indeed has got *Cape Breton* for herself, which would be of little Use to her in Peace, could she keep it, and lost us our Barrier, and the *Austrians* the *Netherlands*. And could any happier Consequences be expected after the Advantages of *Dettingen* had not been vigorously pursued; or the Offers of a just and honourable Peace had been rejected at *Hanau*? I am loth to discuss these Matters more minutely, Respect holds my Tongue when my Heart is full; but I must say, that the present impending Ruin of this State and others might have been prevented that memorable Campaign, either in the Field or Cabinet, if the true Interest of *England* had solely ingrossed the Attention of the Negotiator at *Hanau* and *Worms*.

I was not the only *Dutchman* that had foreseen the ill Success of the War, from the Errors of that Campaign. We foresaw the War would thereby be brought home to our own Doors; but saw no Prospect of diverting the Ruin we foresaw, by implicitly falling into the Measures of the Authors of the Mischiefs; yet this was expected of us; but upon how weak Grounds let their Conduct since proclaim.

It would seem as if the Ministry of *E-----* had design'd our Ruin; nor do they seem to have design'd less that of the House of *Austria*, how lavish soever they have been in its Support. And yet too surely the fall of either would affect *England* essentially.

But we can't fall unless it be our own Faults; because *France*, in ever so great Prosperity will always be glad to exchange her Protection for our Alliance. Nor can the House of *Austria* fall

much lower, unless Covetousness should induce it to forget its real Interest in the Pursuit of Chimeras.

‘ While *England* feeds the Court of *Vienna* with a large Subsidy, the greedy Imperial Ministry will be for continuing a War which must end in the Destruction of their Prince; they won’t see that by hugging their Friends too close, they run the Risque of losing them for ever. This is no less the Situation of the Court of *Turin*: The King of *S-----a*, tho’ otherwise a great and prudent Prince, don’t see that by grasping too much at once he may be obliged to let go all, at one time or other.

‘ But in Regard to *England*, I wonder the Courts of *Vienna* and *Turin* don’t see that she must grow weary of her Burden at last; and that if once she lays it down, it will be extremely difficult to persuade her to take it up again. I think it was about 50 Millions Sterling which *England* owed at the Commencement of this War; ’tis probable she won’t find the Debt to amount to less than 100 Millions at the expiration of it: a monstrous Weight on a Nation subsisting chiefly by foreign Trade, which must inevitably flourish or decline in Proportion to the Cheapness or Dearness of Labour, and the Ease or Oppression of the Industrious.

‘ The present Allies of *England* should have been wise enough not to have drain’d her too much at once, for fear she should either prove a Jade hereafter, or ride rusty when most Speed was required. They should have manag’d her better, and put an End to the War and her Expence as soon as possible: The House of *Austria* ought to have put an End to the War at *Hanau*; and the King of *Sardinia* immediately after the late Battle of *Placentia*: but the Subsidies of *England* had Charms which some could not withstand; and perhaps Ambition, the Bane of Princes, may have been no less the Cause than Avarice.

‘ The Empress Queen continues the War because she won’t part with any thing in *Italy* to a second Prince of *Spain*; and yet she will be oblig’d to it before she can have Peace. The King of *Sardinia* would part with *Savona*, and yet if he had seriously consulted the Interest of his Family he never would have laid Siege to it. *France* on the Side of *Provence* has been saved partly by a Passion for that Port, which without doubt would be extremely convenient for the House of *Savoy*; but should it not be considered that the Detention of it must inevitably be attended with everlasting Broils and Confusions?

‘ Suppose the Fate of the present War should determine the Possession of *Savona*, or *Final*, or both, to the House of *Savoy*; will not the *Genoese* endeavour to recover a Possession torn from them, and without which their Capital would dwindle to Want and

and Poverty ? Certainly they would ; nor could they be blamed for drawing a constant War upon *Italy* and the Enemies of the House of *Savoy* ; in hopes some lucky Event might turn the Current of Power in their Favour.

‘ But are not most Men blinded by Interest and Ambition ? Why was the War begun by the Ministers of the chief of the Allies, but with a View to the Aggrandisement of a favourite Dominion ? and yet it might have been seen without the Gift of Prophecy, that War would naturally train after it such Consequences as would necessarily impede the Enlargement of Territory in view. How mistaken are Mortals, sometimes, in their Pursuits of that which they set their Hearts most on ! How visibly does this Weakness appear in the Conduct of my own Countrymen for more than half an Age ! They precipitated their Country into two bloody and burthenfome Wars to secure their Liberties and enlarge their Trade ; but is not the latter visibly impair’d and the former render’d more precarious by Pursuit of those very Measures which were then judged conducive to those Ends ? Our Condition, I assure you, is not mended in any Sense by our late Wars ; and if I mistake not, *England* has no Reason to exult.

‘ I have often wonder’d how great Men could so egregiously have mistaken the false for the true Interest of their Country so frequently as has been seen, even in our own Days. But surely there must have been some secret Biass which could have carried them so obviously out of the Way. For Instance, Where was the Wisdom of a late Convention for saving the King of *P-----a*, ready to be swallowed up by the joint Power of the Courts of *Vienna*, *Petersburgh* and *Dresden* ? That Prince was then, as always he must be, jealous of the House of *Austria*, while he is in Possession of one of its fairest Provinces ; and he was on no very good Terms with the House of *H-----r*, yet this last must relieve that Prince just when he must sink, or join against *France*. What Strain of Policy was here ? On what Plan of Politics was the Convention concluded at *H-----r* about two Years ago, between *E-----d* and *P-----a* ?

‘ Had not the *Czarina*, the Queen of *Hungary* and the King of *Poland*, been prevented by the abovesaid Convention, his *Prussian* Majesty would have neither the Power, nor Stomach to prolong the War, or give, as he has done, efficacious, tho’ seemingly indirect Aid to *France* : And behold the Consequence of sheltering *P-----a* from the Storm. As soon as ever it was blown over and the strict Union which threaten’d her was dissolv’d, she fell upon *Bohemia* and *Saxony*, and extorted the Treaty of *Dresden*. But this is not all neither. The Court of
Petersburgh,

Petersburgh, I fear, has look'd on, ever since, with more Indifference than before ; and that of *Dresden*, 'tis thought, has thrown quite it self into the Arms of *France* : Such are the Fruits of a Convention which might be intended for recovering the King of *Prussia*, but which had quite other Effects.

‘ I may be singular, but cannot help thinking that the Salvation of *Prussia*, by that Convention, was the most unwarranted Stroke of Policy that has been given since the Death of *Charles VI* ; and, God knows, there have been many gross Errors committed in that Time. *Russia* cooled, *Saxony* lost, and *Prussia* not gained, but enabled to co-operate with the common Enemy.—Heavens ! what a Strain of Policy was that ! Already have these Things happened ; but how much greater Ills are like to happen from the Consequences of that Chef-d’œuvre of the Cabinet of *L-----n* ? A new Storm is gathering in the North, and a new Alliance is talked of, which assuredly is not calculated for the Support of the House of *Austria*, or for reducing the Power of *France*. And without Straining the Point beyond the Ken of Probability, may not all these mighty Ills be placed to the sole Account of those who set *P-----a* at Liberty by the late Convention at *H-----r* ?

‘ You will naturally ask why we *Dutchmen* did not interfere and prevent the Conclusion of a Treaty so big with Danger ? Why, Sir, in the first Place, it was near concluded before we had the least Hint of it ; so impenetrably was the Negotiation kept from all but the Court of *Turin*, who alone has benefited by it, by the large Body of Troops which the Empress was enabled then to send to *Italy* : And next, it would have been too hazardous for us to have attempted the thwarting so powerful and adventurous a Neighbour, of whom we have no less, or rather more Reason to be jealous than of *France*.

‘ I am surprized how the *English* Ministers could suppose us so blind to our true Interest, as to think we would hazard the breaking with *France*, without being secure against the Power and Pretensions of *P-----a*. I am deceived, or *Holland* has more to fear from the latter than the former ; at least I will venture to say, that most *Dutchmen* are of this Opinion. On this Supposition then, would it be prudent in them to make an Enemy of the one, without securing the Friendship of the other ?

‘ In the present Situation of Affairs, *France* is the only Power can secure *Holland*, not only from the dreaded Oppressions of Foreigners but Natives. *Prussia*, from without, and the Power of a Stadtholder within, are only to be repelled by a Power superior to both. But where, but in *France*, shall that friendly Power be found, whose Interest binds her to obstruct

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Incroachments either by *P-----a* or a Stadtholder ? We are jealous that *E-----d* has, ever since the late Alliance with the House of *O-----e*, promoted underhand the Interest of that Family, therefore we cannot reasonably rely on her friendly Aid in Opposition to the Election of a Stadtholder ; and as little perhaps in opposing a Prince, whom the Cabinet of *L-----n* had so lately enabled to dictate, and give Law to his Neighbours.

Thus, Sir, have I told you freely my Thoughts concerning publick Affairs. I wish I may be mistaken as to the Event of the ensuing Campaign, and the Success of the Conferences at *Breda*. But I can see no Reason for hoping that the Allies will be superior to *France* in Numbers, or equal to her in Skill and Address, tho' I have the highest Veneration for, and Opinion of the Royal Youth who is to command : Besides, why shall we flatter ourselves, or endeavour to impose on others ? If we were willing, we are not able to furnish the Quota we have promised to compleat the Army ; and, I fear, we want the Will no less than the Power of continuing the War. I am an Enemy to Double-dealing, and had I been in Power, would have roundly told the *English* Ministers, who had so often lately journey'd hither to lure this State into the Measures of *England*, That their Conduct promised not Success, and that it was neither the Inclinations of the Majority of our People, nor Interest of the State, to break with the House of *Bourbon*, to the Ruin of the Remains of our Trade ; nor to irritate *France* by an open Breach, to the Danger of our Liberties. Such a free Declaration, probably, would have accelerated the Work of Peace, more than the War possibly can in the slothful Manner it has hitherto been carried on by the Allies, in this Neighbourhood.

Then as for the Queen of *Hungary*, willing as she may be to recover the *Netherlands*, it is very likely she will be more intent on the Preservation of *Italy*, and guarding against any Designs she may apprehend from near Neighbours, or Effects she may dread from the impending Troubles in the North. Her first Care will be Home, and the next *Italy*, which seems to require her utmost Attention, since the Miscarriage of the Design upon *Provence*, and the Convulsion at *Genoa*. With such Cares then, can we flatter ourselves she will, or is able, to fulfil her Engagements for enabling *England* to act offensively in the *Netherlands* ?

I confess myself no less an Infidel in regard to the present Conferences at *Breda*. What Increase of Power or Success has attended the Arms of the Enemies of *France*, since the late Conferences at that Place, that should encourage one to expect the

House

House of *Bourbon*, will yield sooner, or bend lower now, than she did last Year? In *Italy*, the Scene is visibly altered in Favour of *France* and *Spain*, since the Miscarriage of Count *Brown*, and the Revolt of the *Genoese*, if the Word, Revolt, may be applicable to a free, independent People, struggling for all that is dear to Man. If the *French* and *Spaniards* push into *Italy* from *France*, what shall prevent their subjecting the King of *Sardinia*, and dispossessing the House of *Austria*, of all its Dominions in *Lombardy*? And such, probably, will be the Case, unless the Empress-Queen should quite disarm herself at Home, to reinforce her Army in *Italy*. As fine a Country as *Italy* is, *Bohemia* and *Moravia* are more valuable to the Possessor of *Austria*; therefore, unless the Queen will lie at the Mercy, and rely on the *Bonne Foy* of certain Neighbours, she cannot be supposed to be able to prevent the Loss of *Italy*, if *France* be hearty in its Reduction.

‘ On what part of the Theatre of War, shall we cast our Eyes for a Prospect of Success, the ensuing Campaign, on the Part of the House of *Austria*, or its Friends? the Partizans of the House of *O---e*, among us and the *English* that reside here, affect to be uncommonly sanguine, in regard to the Wonders to be done against *France*, on the Side of the *Netherlands*, even before the *French* can take the Field. This sort of Language may be very well adapted to the Genius of Neighbouring *Islanders*, who generally are, and love to be lull’d, and fed with Chimæras; nor may it less be necessary, in regard to their Statesmen, who are obliged to throw out such Tubs to a People, who shut or open their Purses, as they are in or out of Humour, at the Conduct of their Directors. But, Sir, for my Part, tho’ I am an Enemy to despair, I am no Cherisher of Hope against Conviction. I have before given you my Thoughts as to the Non-ability of the States, and the Empress-Queen, to furnish their Quotas of Men; but supposing they could, why should not *France*, be as early in the Field as her Enemies? has she not had all the great Towns, and fertile Provinces of the *Austrian Netherlands*, in her Hands, to quarter her Troops in, all the Winter? are not her Magazines full; and have we any reason to think that her Military Chest is empty.

‘ I don’t know how it happens, but the present Generation, seem to be all born the Children of Credulity. They don’t argue from Principles, so much as from Prejudice, or Affection? because they wish *France* reduced, she must be weak and impotent: The *French* walk all on Crutches and are in no Condition to keep Peace with their Neighbours. Is not this reasoning, or rather babbling against Reason, against Experience, against Con-

vicition:

viction : *France*, has, above two Centuries, extended her Modes and Languages all over *Europe*; I hope *E-----d* does not expect the World will receive her Credulity, and Chimæras as implicitly.

‘ I admit that the Efforts for an early Campaign are greater than usual this Spring. *E-----d*, whether to sooth her young ROYAL HERO’s martial Disposition, or to induce *France* to make greater Concessions; or out of some secret domestic Consideration, has lately bustled and expended far beyond her natural Strength, in order to an early and vigorous Campaign. But alas ! shall we hope for Miracles ? How have we deserved that Providence should alter the ordinary Course of Things in our Favour ? Shall we get through, in a Campaign, all those Bulwarks which took up ten when a MARLBOROUGH commanded our Armies ? or shall we leave them all behind us, as some Visionaries affect to recommend, and penetrate into the Heart of *France*, in order to remove the Flame from our Borders into her Bowels ? vague and unadvised Hopes ! Happy, if in the ensuing Campaign, *France* will be quiet and content herself with what she has already got ! I wish she may rest on the Defensive only. But should she exert all her Skill and Power on this Side, and should Fortune smile on that superior Force and Address as usual, what may be the Consequence to this State particularly, is easier imagined than express’d.

‘ I think I am not timed by Nature, and yet I tremble when I reflect on the Consequences of an ensuing unsuccessful Campaign. Suppose *Luxemburgh* taken, or *Maestrick*, if the *French* be inclined to force the Republic to avow openly what may have been her private Sentiments of a long while ; and suppose the Army under the young Royal Leader fail’d in attempting the Relief of either of those Fortresses, what are we to expect ? Must not the Republic yield ; must she not wisely chuse the alternative of *Protection* before intire Subjection ? or at best must she not yield implicitly to a Neutrality on the Terms of *France*, and to such a Barrier as that Crown shall be pleased to chalk out ? One decisive Blow puts it out of the Power of the Republic to continue the War ; and without *Holland* what Figure can the Powers of *Austria* and *England* make in the *Netherlands*, and I can’t see all round the World any Confederates they can flatter themselves withal ? *Austria*, in her present Situation, can form no View of Success. She is, and is like to be, unaided by any of the Powers of *Germany*, who seem all to wish her Declension. And what is no less unpromising, she has worn out not only the Patience but I fear the Strength of *England* ; a Strength, which, as I observed before, should have been more sparingly

sparingly and cautiously manag'd by the Courts of *Vienna* and *Turin*, if ever they expected it should be employ'd in their Behalf on future Occasions. But has *France* the like Dangers to apprehend? Is the Prospect so unfavourable should she meet with a Check this Summer? If she looses a Battle, can't she act on the Defensive the rest of the Campaign, having so many Fortresses to cover her Armies? Even may she not repair her Losses before the End of the Campaign? Has she no Reason to hope for Shelter from the *Prussian* Eagle, should Fortune frown upon her? or, in a Run of Ill-luck, might she not hope to acquire other Allies besides *Prussia* in the Empire, and expect Relief from the Alliance now forming in the North under her Auspices?

But, it may be urged, if *France* has so flattering a Prospect in View and so reasonable a Reliance on being succour'd should she stand in need of Support, why is she more forward in her Advances to Peace than even her Enemies?—Why indeed? not because she seeks Peace in earnest, but because she finds her Interest in persuading the World she does. Has she not amused the World with Peace all the while she was gathering Laurels and adding that very favourite Country to her Dominions, which all the *French* Kings and Ministers since *Henry IV.* have unwarily and earnestly set their Hearts on?

France has had a constant Eye to the *Austrian Netherlands* for above 200 Years, and spilt a Sea of human Gore to accomplish the desired Acquisition. And shall we weakly think she will part from this golden Apple, now she has it and no likelihood of her being dispossest'd, for such a Gew-gaw as *Cape-Breton*? I pity those who do not see the Drift of that Crown in setting a high Value on that barren, northern Colony, wholly useless but in time of War, and little less so even while it subsists, if the *French* act with any tolerable Wisdom and Resolution.

The more eager *France* appears for that Possession, the more Tenacious will *England* be to keep it; which is just what answers the Purpose of that crafty Court. The *English* themselves, by the infinite Value they set on that Conquest, in their Political Writings, have taught *France* to play the Game. But little do they know the Views or Ambition of that Crown, who imagine the Cabinet of *Versailles* would exchange even *Namure*, for *Louisburg*, while there was hopes of keeping the Former: the Restitution of the latter, I doubt not, will be always the first Article *France* insists on; and should this be conceded to her, even on her own Terms, she won't be at any loss for other Pretexts, to spin out the Time, while she is spreading and securing

curing her Conquests, and creating and augmenting the Disabilities of her Enemies. *Spain* shall come in for her Share, in the refin'd Juggle, and hold a back Hand to her adroit Neighbour, when he thinks it proper to shift the Scene.

‘ I agree that the Circumstances of both *France* and *Spain*, require Peace ; but all things consider'd, their Business is to prolong the War, and when was it known that the *Bourbons* neglected their true Interest ? By the Continuance of the War, *France* may be closely pinched ; but it appears to me, that the Disabilities of her Enemies will make a far quicker Progression. And thus, by a Demonstration almost equal to Mathematical, *France* must succeed in all her Views by the Continuance of the War, nor is the Prospect much less favourable on the Side of *Spain*. There is scarce a Doubt, that ample Provision will be secured for Don *Philip* in *Italy* ; and I will not answer, that *Spain* will not think herself in a Plight, before a Peace, to insist on an exclusive Trade in *America*, and ample Security for the same. Nor am I sure, that her Haughtiness will not extend so far, as to cast a steady Eye on Possessions which she must ever see with Regret in the Hands of her present Enemy.

‘ It is thought to be a standing Maxim with *France* to drop her Allies if she can do her own Business by a Peace. But supposing this to be true, *Spain* does not at all fall with the Description of such Allies as *France* was wont to abandon occasionally. The Families of *France* and *Spain* are of the same Blood, and their Interest is, and always must, be inseparable. For which Reason I was surprized that the Cabinet of *London* had relied so confidently on detaching the latter from the former, on the Demise of *Philip V*.

‘ But should *France* weakly overlook the general Interest of her House for some immediate temporary Advantage, I do not think that *Spain* is in an Humour to bear, or forgive, so gross a Slight ; nor can I persuade myself that *France* will venture to make the Experiment. *Spain*, indeed, may listen to Overtures made to her separately, but her Connexion with *France* and her own Interest, will always oblige her to act in Concert with that Crown, however it may seem Otherwise to those who are willing to be deluded. And should the present King of *Spain* be of other Sentiments, he would hardly find a Ministry to co-operate with him while there is so remote a Prospect of his having Issue.

‘ The Situation of Affairs at present seems extremely critical ; and, in my Mind, much more so than heretofore. The War is a certain Calamity and Weight on all those that are involved in it, and yet it seems to be their Interest to continue it,

but from very different Motives. *France* will continue it with a View, that if she can weary out her Enemies, they will acquiesce with her Conquests, and receive the Law at her Hands ; and they may continue it not so much by Choice as Necessity. While the Empress Queen can trade with the ready Money of *England*, she may think the War more eligible than Peace, as thinking to get by the former, more than she can possibly hope by the latter in her present Circumstances. But *England*, with no View in the World to be Gainer by the War, chuses to continue it, rather than make a ruinous Peace, after putting herself to an immense Expence in the Prosecution of various, I will not say, vague Projects, for reducing *France*. Her Statesmen know not how to excuse a bad, a very bad Peace, such as may be expected, to a Nation whom they had made believe, that every Campaign, and every Million, would be the last.

Thus is the War continued, and like to be so, on different Principles. The Conferences at *Breda* may be resumed from Time to Time occasionally, and, perhaps occasionally too, with a seeming Prospect of Success ; but I cannot gain upon myself to expect that the Olive Tree will grow up in that Soil ; nor will I answer, but the Roar of Cannon before *Maestrick*, or some other *Dutch* Fortress, may frighten away all our pacific Cooks before the End of next Month. If *France* once breaks Ground on the Territories of the Republic, we *Dutchmen* will hastily drop the general for a particular Treaty, and leave those, fond of Forms and Punctilios, to determine whose Ministers shall be admitted to the Conferences.

How visible is the Fineness of one Party of the Peace-hunters at *Breda*, and the weak, at least, unreasonable Scruples of others ! But, the Court of one of the Allies, ever tenacious of Forms and Shadows, cannot resolve to alter her Conduct. *France* improves the Opportunity, and *E---d* either sees not the Hook, or is forced to swallow it. She would be thought to despise the Enemy, but stands, I fear, in more Awe than her Friends would wish, or, perhaps she herself imagines : The Dread of the late Progress of the young Pretender may still hang on certain Minds. Nor can we wonder if *France* could be so managed, as to affect a Coolness on the exiled Prince's Interest, and a Disrelish to the making fresh Disturbance in his Favour.

France, by such Affectations, will imperceptibly acquire Influence, which will operate more or less in all Dealings between the two States. But I should much admire, that any such Dread of that Crown would create any Influence whatever, considering the Visibility of the Intentions of the Cabinet of *Versailles* in regard to the Pretender. One would think the late Conduct

Conduct of *France* to be too manifest a Proof of her Disregard to that Interest, to leave the least Doubt on the Minds of the *English* Ministry. For can it be supposed, that if *France* thought it for her Interest to place the *Stuarts* on the Throne of *England*, she would not have assisted towards the Success of an Attempt which bid so fair for succeeding as this last, had it been supported early and effectually?

' *France*, it is true, was much inferior to *England* in Naval Force; but let it not therefore be said, that it was utterly impracticable for her to have aided the young Pretender. As well as she could steal out her Fleets for the South, East, and West, she might steer to the North likewise, had not the Fault lain in the Will. And if she wanted that Will, while her Conquests were less certain, and more limited, than at present, why shall we suppose she will change her System, when she stands not in need of an insular Ally?

' I take all religious Considerations to be clear out of the Question in this Case. Religion has been often made a Cloak of heretofore. But Moderns are no longer at a Loss in regard to the true Meaning and Interests of Princes. Interest is the sole Motive of their Conduct. But did not this Supposition hold true in general, I fancy no one would fix on the King of *France* as an apt Exception. We may conclude therefore, that *France* thinks it not her Interest to change the Settlement of *England*, and consequently will never give it effectual Disturbance, however she may seem to act otherwise for particular temporary Ends. For this Reason, there can be no Doubt that the Interest of the Pretender would not obstruct, one single Moment, the Business of Peace if it rested, not only on the giving up that Interest solemnly, but on a Prohibition to the Sons of taking up their Residence in *France*.

' No, Sir, the *Stuarts*, in no ways, impede the Peace; their Interests and Pretensions are equally unconsulted by *France*, the only Power that might be supposed to have them at Heart. If the Work of Peace does not go forward, it is because *France* is not in earnest about it; because she does not think it for her Interest that War should cease; and until she does, it never can, however Speculists may indulge themselves with new Allies and Confederates.

' These sanguine Partizans have long plumed themselves on powerful Succours from *Russia*, without considering the Incapacities of that Crown on one hand, and the Obstruction given on the other, by the late Convention at *H-----r* between *E-----d* and *P-----a*. Before that Treaty blunted the Edge of *Russia's* Resentment of the Conduct of *P-----a*, she was willing, and far more

more able than at present, to aid in the taking down that young aspiring Monarch. But who does not see her present Incapacity of assisting the Empress Queen? *Sweden* in Motion; she and *Denmark*, *Saxony* and *Prussia* in a Confederacy against her, and the Conduct of the *Turk* suspicious; in such a Situation, what Grounds can the Champions for War assign for their Hopes of Succour from *Russia*?

‘ If we consider the genuine Situation of the Northern Empress, we cannot, without committing Violence on the Understanding, view her in the Light of an Ally to be relied on for the humbling *France*. Not but that the Court of *Petersburgh* would be glad of an Opportunity to march her Troops, and make Parade of her Power in *Germany*, and meddle in the Affairs of the Empire, where she long has had a Desire of having a Footing that she might become a Member, and have a Vote in the Dyet. But the late and frequent Revolutions of that Empire, do not permit the *Czarina* to embarque in foreign Quarrels.

‘ A Government, like her’s, founded on Revolution-Principles, cannot be too wary and circumspect in the creating new Enemies Abroad, or affording Opportunities to secret Enemies at Home. On the Footing of hereditary Right, or Proximity of Blood, it is well known the present Wearer of the *Russian* Diadem stands but in the second Rank. And however fond some Nations may be, or seem to be of Novelty, there is a certain natural Attachment to Proximity of Blood, which every now and then will intrude it self, and be the Means of warping, or weaning, the Majority of a People from Duty and Obedience, where they suppose them not to be rightfully due. If then the *Czarina* be considered in this Light, we must suppose her blind to her own Interest, should she enter into any foreign Quarrel uncom-pelled, or march any considerable Body of Troops from Home. But was she in no Dread of domestic Feuds, the present Motions of *Sweden* and the *Porte*, and the Power and Address of *Prussia*, to say nothing of *France*, who probably sets all the Wheels of the hostile Machine in Motion, might well excuse the Sovereign of *Russia* from marching a considerable corps of Troops at this Time to the Succour of the House of *Austria*; but far less excuseable are those who fondly build on Succour from a Princess under such obvious Disabilities.

‘ Whether then shall the Courts of *Vienna*, *London* and *Turin*, cast abroad their Views in seeking for new Confederates that might enable them to humble the Pride of the House of *Bourbon*? They cannot, in reason, rely on the Court of *Petersburgh*, for the Reasons mentioned, and as little on *Denmark*, while *Prussia* and *Saxony* are so closely connected with *Sweden*,

as it is thought they are at present. But supposing *Denmark* had not been thus awed by the Vicinity of such powerful Allies, nor influenced by the Gold, Power, nor Address of *France*, of what Use would her Prince be, as a Confederate, unless to be an additional Burthen to *England*, who must pay his Troops, and soothe him with a Subsidy into the Bargain? Such Confederates would rather clogg, than quicken, the Pace of the Allies to Conquest and Success. For as *England*, who already bears up, by the Force of her Treasures, the impotent Courts of *V---a* and *T---n*, must necessarily sink under the additional Burthen of a new monyless Ally, the open Junction of *Denmark* with the present Enemies of *France*, would rather hurt themselves than annoy her.

As much as it may be the Interest of *England* to aggrandize the House of *Austria*, as a Balance to that of *Bourbon*, I fear the other Members of the *Germanic* Body, think it no less theirs to prevent the Soaring of an Eagle whose Flights have been heretofore injurious as well to the collective Body in general, as to the particular Members of it. And for this Reason, so certain and self-evident, I wondered *England* would undertake alone the Reduction of the Power of *France*, and Support of the House of *Austria*. Without the hearty Concurrence of the *Germanic* Body, the Thing was morally impracticable; and without being wilfully blind, it must have been seen, that that Concurrence could never be obtained while *Prussia*, seconded by *France*, was able to influence the other Powers of the Empire.

After the late Conquest of *Silesia*, *England* had but one of two Plans to pursue. The first, and most eligible, was to clap up a Peace between the two great Houses at Variance at any Hazard and Expence; which might be done at *Hanau* on reasonable and honourable Terms. But since that more salutary Plan was not cherished, the only that remained was, to lower *Prussia* in order to pull down *France*. For as Matters were then, and still are circumstanced, those Powers must stand or fall together, while that of *Austria* is in any Plight to give Umbrage to either. The Treaty of *Warsaw* in 1745 happily put it in the Power of *England* to execute this second Plan; but by a Strain of Policy, unheard of among Statesmen, the Cabinet of *L---n*, warded the Blow from *Prussia*, by that memorable Convention concluded at *H---r* the same Year.

I could never hear of a colourable Reason for the Obstruction which is said to have been given by *E---d* to the Negotiation at *Hanau*. Sure I am, it could not have been the Interest of a trading Nation to obstruct or retard the Work of Peace.

England

England could have no View to gain by Continuance of the War. But, perhaps, it was then otherwise with *H----*, as *Charles VII.* might have been unwilling to co-operate in any *Enlargement* of Territory, and there was a Prospect of forcing him to it by the Continuance of the War.

‘ The Arguments offered in Favour of the Convention of *H----* were no less vague and frivolous. But such an additional Power as that of *Russia*, by such an Increase of the Confederates against *France*, the War, they say, might be prolonged, and therefore it was politic to save *Prussia*, and reject the Succours of *Russia* in order to shorten the Clue to Peace. Monstrous ! to think that an Enemy shall yield the sooner the more vigorously and powerfully he is attacked ! I wonder Men are not ashamed of the glaring Absurdity of their lame Excuses. Why will not they rather speak out, and own their Weakness and repent ?

‘ The Cabinet of *L-----* then, I conceive, had two Motives in preserving the King of *Prussia* by the Convention of *H----* in 1745. The first was, to wean him from *France*, and bind him to *E-----*, by Ties of Gratitude ; and the next, to set the Court of *Vienna*, who was obliged to keep most of her Troops to observe the Motions of that of *Berlin*, at Liberty to preserve *Italy*, and succour the King of *Sardinia*, then ready to be overrun by the combined Armies of *France*, *Spain* and *Naples*.

‘ As for the Policy of securing the Friendship of modern Princes by Ties of Gratitude, unless their Interest co-operates, it will not pass for current, I fear, but among the Green and Unfledged. And tho’ the succouring *Sardinia* be a more colourable Plea, yet I believe it would be more eligible to defer those Succours, if the Detention promised the Humiliation of a Prince, who was, and is, and probably will continue *France’s* best Prop and Ally : Therefore, to wind up this Part of my Subject, I cannot help being of Opinion, that the shortest Road to the Heart of *France*, in 1745, at least, was thro’ *Berlin* : but since the *E-----* Statesmen thought proper to take a quite different Rout, such a one, as in the general Opinion, could never lead to Security and a solid Peace, they ought not to wonder that we *Dutchmen* would endeavour to explore a new Path to Safety.

‘ I shall be free enough with you, Sir, continued this sagacious Statesman, to own, that I now look on the Increase of the *Prussian* Power, to be the best and only Barrier *Holland* can have against *France* ; and how paradoxical soever it may seem, I look on *France* on the other hand, to be our best Barrier against

gainst *Prussia* ; for at present, it is not very clear, which of the two, *Holland* has most Reason to dread.

‘ Therefore, I take it to be our best Policy, should the Chance of the War continue in Favour of *France*, to pay her and *Prussia* equal Court ; to irritate neither, and to put every Art in Practice, for creating and fomenting constant Jealousy between them, without kindling an eternal Flame. *Prussia* is at one of our Doors, or rather intermixt with us, by means of *East-Freezland* ; and *France* by her late Conquests, is at the other : neither I believe, will judge it Politic, to force in singly upon us, and I can much less suppose they will join in the Attempt. We may reasonably conclude then, that as neither can see the other incroach upon us, without interfering ; so both will be constantly on the Watch, to preserve us, free and independent.

‘ Thus may we again be at leisure to mind that, which chiefly employs the Attention of our People : our Trade has been declining ever since our late Stadtholder taught us to be like himself, fond of the Glory of Arms. But by the Vicinity of two such great Powers, who never can agree about the Division of our Bear’s Skin, we shall have nothing in View, but that principal Object, and nothing to mind, but its Extension.

‘ If then, we can recover our Trade, avoid the Expence of Armies and Fortresses, in a great Measure ; and that of Naval Armaments, except for the Protection of our Commerce, and preserve Freedom, by means of these two Powers, of different Religions, what shall we have to do with the Broils and Contentions of either our Insular Neighbours or those on the *Continent* ? like a Ship, moor’d Fore and Aft, we shall ride safe at Anchor, in the Port of Safety, unheeding, and unmoved at Tempests, ruffling other Nations.

‘ The different Religions of *France* and *Prussia* will be no less our Security, than their Jealousy of each other, and while we tolerate all Religions among us, neither of these Powers, will think it either just or proper, to endeavour the Obtrusion of his own particular System upon us.

‘ We may be morally sure, that *France* and *Prussia* won’t quarrel, while the House of *Austria* is in any Condition to give Umbrage to the Latter : and we may be equally sure, they won’t join in any Conquest that don’t affect that House immediately ; much less is there any Room to apprehend they will join in subjecting us to their Yoke. Both may have their Eyes upon us, but, I am mistaken, or *France* would wish us her Allies rather than her Subjects ; and though *Prussia* may be of a

different Opinion, yet may we reckon on the Power and Jealousy of the former for our Safety and Protection.

‘ I have often envied the Happiness of the *English* on account of their Insular Situation, which naturally secluded them from the Broils of the Continent, if they had not obviously swerv’d from their immediate Interest in the Pursuit of Foreign Quarrels. That Nation have done us infinite Injury in our Trade, principally occasion’d by the natural Products of their Country, their Situation and the Safety of their Ports. But should our Condition mend by the Vicinity and Jealousy of *France* and *Prussia*, on this Plan, we shall soon recover those Commercial Advantages which they had gain’d of us before the present War. We were willing to forego these Benefits while we stood in need of *England* against *France*. But *Prussia*, for the future, bids fairest to be our principal Bulwark against that Crown : And there is no doubt that *France* will be our eternal Bulwark against *Prussia*. So that hereafter we shan’t need involving ourselves in Guaranties and Alliances as heretofore, nor shall we need any Treaties even with *E---d* but such as regard Commerce and Navigation.

‘ If the *E---sh* will persist in their vague Pursuites in quest of the *Balance of Power*, which has already stood them so very dear, that is no Reason that we *Dutch* should, like them, lose sight of our immediate Interest to grasp at a Shadow.

‘ What is this *Balance of Power*, which has cost them and us so dear for the last Century, but a Phantom of the Creation of distemper’d Brains ? If *Influence* be the best Proof of Power, I don’t see but the Balance, all along, has been on the Side of *France*, tho’ we and the *English* were vain enough to think we had fix’d it.

‘ But however the Beam might have appear’d, for the Time past, to have been directed by the Maritime Powers, ’tis visible to the World that *France* holds it all alone at present. And shall we rank ourselves among the *Quixots* who think to wrest it from her, while her *Influence* is almost universal ? Look round where one will, *French Influence* rises in view in one Shape or other. It takes that of *Dread* in some States, of *Love* in a few, and of *Self-Interest* in many ; but here among us it is a Composition of all three.

‘ There are some among us, who out of a Dread of the Power of *France*, would be for observing an exact Neutrality, during the present Contests ; others in reality, and those not a few, bear a natural Affection to the *French* Nation, and have no Prejudice to the Mode of *French* Government : but the Majority of our People are wholly bias’d by *Self-Interest*, that
most

most forceible Tie on Man. By this therefore were we held in Suspence while *France* was extending her Conquests to the Doors, on a Supposition that we should find our Account more in her Friendship and Protection, as a near Neighbour, than in her Enmity at a Distance.

‘ *France* appears no longer, to these, that Monster of Perfidy, Cruelty, and Ambition which she had been pourtray’d with so great Industry in the Reign of *Lewis XIV.* But should her Ambition exceed our Conception of it, we are pretty sure she has no Views to indulge it at our Expence, because, not only that her real Interest forbids it but that she is sure *Prussia* could and would oppose her.

‘ Thus may we hope that our State will not only preserve its Freedom but recover its Trade, be the Event of the approaching Campaign what it may. Should Victory declare against *France*, of which I own there is no great Appearance, the War will be prolonged, and while the *English* and *French* are involved in its Calamities, we shall be at Leisure to retrieve our Commerce; and should Success continue on the *Bourbon* Side, we have the Bucklar of *Prussia* to secure us against their Power, which, however, they never will employ against us while it will be more their Interest to protect and defend us.’

I have thus chose, Sir, to gratify your Curiosity from the Mouth of a *Dutchman* rather than my own Pen, less skilled in the Politics of this State, and probably not more so in those of others. This plain *Hollander* may appear, on that Side of the Water, to be singular in some of his Notions, and, perhaps, too abstrude and refined in some of his Speculations; but on this Side, he has the good Fortune to have his Sentiments generally adopted by his own Conntrymen.

The modern *Dutchmen* differ as widely from their Ancestors, as you tell me the *English* do. The Forefathers of the latter, before the Close of the last Age, were chiefly attentive to the Extention of their Trade, the Improvement of their Lands, and Propagation of their Faith; but of late they lost Sight of these Objects in the Pursuit of imaginary Dragons and Windmills all over the Continent. Those of the former, tho’ they never lost View of their Trade, were too much in love with the Glory of Arms, and too ambitious of an Inlargement of Territory. Besides, like the modern *English*, they had too strong an Itch to *Balance-holding* and Treaty-making.

But be assured, Sir, that *Dutchmen* have long been cured of such Frenzies. The present Generation of *Hollanders* hold the Politics of their more warlike Ancestors in equal Contempt with those of their insular Neighbours. And had the Court you reside

sides at, been as attentive to the Variation in the Humours and Sentiments of the *Dutch* as might be expected, *England* would not have relied on her being able to force them into an open Breach with *France*.

This seems, however, to have been the sole Drift of the Cabinet of *L-----n* from the Beginning of the present Contests. And yet the *E-----b* Ministry could never have built on so weak a Foundation; if they had not neglected making the necessary Inspection into the Minds of those whom they designed thus to impel, if they could not lure them into their Measures.

Is it not evident that Lord *C-----t*, the then ruling Minister of *E-----d*, had the Compulsion of the States in view, when he could advise a Transportation of a Body of Troops to *Flanders* without their Concurrence ; with the same View was the War first nursed up in the *Netherlands*, hoping that a Fire at their Door would rouse *Dutchmen* from their Lethargy. Whereas, had that adventurous Statesman consulted the Tempers of those whom he thus intended to force into the Measures of his Court, he would have changed his System, or resolved to bear down *France*, by the Strength of his own Country, without the Aid of *Holland*.

But the Mistake lay, I presume, in that Nobleman's Reliance on the Influence of the Partizans of the House of *O-----e*, or in supposing the *Dutch* as fickle and variable as his own Countrymen. Perhaps too he might have built on the Power of a *secret Specifick*, practised, they say, of late Years, with great Success in a Country where, it seems, he even then, had more Power than Credit, and more Enemies than Friends.

We see that Experience has testified against the Politics of the Cabinet of *L---n*. The *Dutch* were not to be moved any otherwise than on their own Terms, and in their slow Manner. Yet tho' this Singularity of theirs was visible to the whole Earth, has *E---d* still persisted in the same mistaken Measures. She will still pursue the War, tho' the Prospect before her is far from being inviting. She pursues it against the Grain of the *Dutch*, who probably will be the first to leave her to shift for herself on the first ominous Occasion. And she has pursued it, when she might have put an End to it with Safety and Honour. This last Consideration cannot but dwell on the Minds of all the firm Friends of Liberty and Peace, who, should Victory declare against the Allies, may very naturally and justly impute all their future Calamities to the mistaken Politics of *E---b* Statesmen. I have the Honour to be, &c.

F I N I S.